

Assembly Bill No. 800

CHAPTER 371

An act to amend Section 13271 of the Water Code, relating to water.

[Approved by Governor October 10, 2007. Filed with
Secretary of State October 10, 2007.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 800, Lieu. Discharge of hazardous substance or sewage.

(1) Existing law generally requires a person who, without regard to intent or negligence, causes or permits any sewage or other waste, or the effluent of treated sewage or other waste, to be discharged in or on any waters of the state, or discharged in or deposited where it is, or probably will be, discharged in or on any waters of the state, as soon as that person has knowledge of the discharge, to immediately notify the local health officer or the director of environmental health of the discharge. A person who fails to notify in accordance with these requirements is guilty of a misdemeanor that is punishable by a fine that is not less than \$500 nor more than \$1,000, or imprisonment for less than one year, or both.

(2) The Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act generally requires a person who causes or permits any hazardous substance or sewage to be discharged in or on any waters of the state, as soon as that person has knowledge of the discharge and other requirements are met, to immediately notify the Office of Emergency Services of the discharge in accordance with specified spill reporting requirements. The act requires the Office of Emergency Services to immediately notify the appropriate California regional water quality control board and the local health officer and administrator of environmental health of the discharge. A person who fails to notify in accordance with these requirements, with a certain exception, is guilty of a misdemeanor that is punishable by a fine of not more than \$20,000, imprisonment for not more than one year, or both.

This bill would provide that notification pursuant to these provisions does not nullify a person's responsibilities pursuant to (1) above.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 13271 of the Water Code is amended to read:

13271. (a) (1) Except as provided by subdivision (b), any person who, without regard to intent or negligence, causes or permits any hazardous substance or sewage to be discharged in or on any waters of the state, or discharged or deposited where it is, or probably will be, discharged in or on any waters of the state, shall, as soon as (A) that person has knowledge

of the discharge, (B) notification is possible, and (C) notification can be provided without substantially impeding cleanup or other emergency measures, immediately notify the Office of Emergency Services of the discharge in accordance with the spill reporting provision of the state toxic disaster contingency plan adopted pursuant to Article 3.7 (commencing with Section 8574.16) of Chapter 7 of Division 1 of Title 2 of the Government Code.

(2) The Office of Emergency Services shall immediately notify the appropriate regional board, the local health officer, and the director of environmental health of the discharge. The regional board shall notify the state board as appropriate.

(3) Upon receiving notification of a discharge pursuant to this section, the local health officer and the director of environmental health shall immediately determine whether notification of the public is required to safeguard public health and safety. If so, the local health officer and the director of environmental health shall immediately notify the public of the discharge by posting notices or other appropriate means. The notification shall describe measures to be taken by the public to protect the public health.

(b) The notification required by this section shall not apply to a discharge in compliance with waste discharge requirements or other provisions of this division.

(c) Any person who fails to provide the notice required by this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be punished by a fine of not more than twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) or imprisonment in a county jail for not more than one year, or both. Except where a discharge to the waters of this state would have occurred but for cleanup or emergency response by a public agency, this subdivision shall not apply to any discharge to land which does not result in a discharge to the waters of this state.

(d) Notification received pursuant to this section or information obtained by use of that notification shall not be used against any person providing the notification in any criminal case, except in a prosecution for perjury or giving a false statement.

(e) For substances listed as hazardous wastes or hazardous material pursuant to Section 25140 of the Health and Safety Code, the state board, in consultation with the Department of Toxic Substances Control, shall by regulation establish reportable quantities for purposes of this section. The regulations shall be based on what quantities should be reported because they may pose a risk to public health or the environment if discharged to groundwater or surface water. Regulations need not set reportable quantities on all listed substances at the same time. Regulations establishing reportable quantities shall not supersede waste discharge requirements or water quality objectives adopted pursuant to this division, and shall not supersede or affect in any way the list, criteria, and guidelines for the identification of hazardous wastes and extremely hazardous wastes adopted by the Department of Toxic Substances Control pursuant to Chapter 6.5 (commencing with Section 25100) of Division 20 of the Health and Safety Code. The regulations of the Environmental Protection Agency for reportable quantities of hazardous

substances for purposes of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980, as amended (42 U.S.C. Sec. 9601 et seq.) shall be in effect for purposes of the enforcement of this section until the time that the regulations required by this subdivision are adopted.

(f) (1) The state board shall adopt regulations establishing reportable quantities of sewage for purposes of this section. The regulations shall be based on the quantities that should be reported because they may pose a risk to public health or the environment if discharged to groundwater or surface water. Regulations establishing reportable quantities shall not supersede waste discharge requirements or water quality objectives adopted pursuant to this division. For purposes of this section, “sewage” means the effluent of a municipal wastewater treatment plant or a private utility wastewater treatment plant, as those terms are defined in Section 13625, except that sewage does not include recycled water, as defined in subdivisions (c) and (d) of Section 13529.2.

(2) A collection system owner or operator, as defined in paragraph (1) of subdivision (a) of Section 13193, in addition to the reporting requirements set forth in this section, shall submit a report pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 13193.

(g) Except as otherwise provided in this section and Section 8589.7 of the Government Code, a notification made pursuant to this section shall satisfy any immediate notification requirement contained in any permit issued by a permitting agency. When notifying the Office of Emergency Services, the person shall include all of the notification information required in the permit.

(h) For the purposes of this section, the reportable quantity for perchlorate shall be 10 pounds or more by discharge to the receiving waters, unless a more restrictive reporting standard for a particular body of water is adopted pursuant to subdivision (e).

(i) Notification under this section does not nullify a person’s responsibility to notify the local health officer or the director of environmental health pursuant to Section 5411.5 of the Health and Safety Code.